

# The Rediscovered Flower of Mutual Aid

*The Dissolved Carcass of Power*



Columbia, Missouri Slips into Anti-Authoritarianism:  
After an Earthquake a Midwestern Community Rebuilds into a  
Revolution

## The Rediscovered Flower of Mutual Aid

By Mark Bohnert

A Crack In the Church #2  
(Second issue of the *In the Church* zine series)

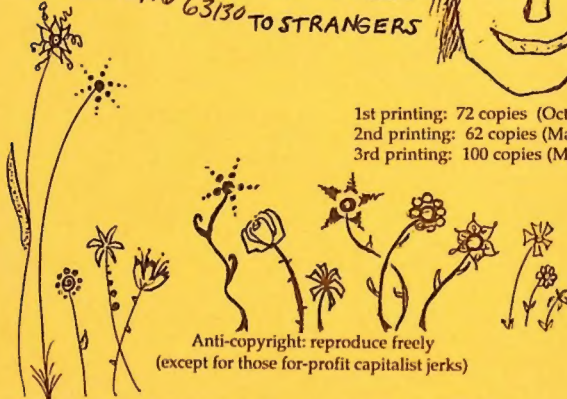
Drawings/collages by Mark

Write me! Tell me what's on your mind! I'm friendly!  
My address:

320 N. Skinker It's O.K. TO  
#25 SAY HELLO  
St. Louis MO 63130 TO STRANGERS



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*Masturbating in a Church #1*

A 12-page picture story of my experiences in Catholicism

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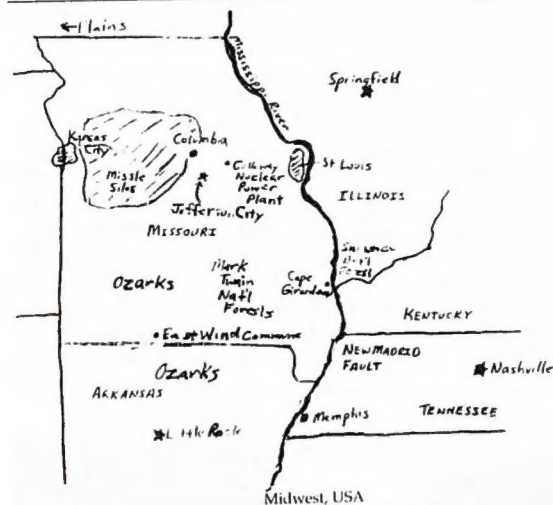
Warning: this is NOT a literary piece; don't judge it as such! My goal was to have a fun time writing about how a cooperative, wageless society may develop, how it may function, and what changes such a revolution might bring out in humanity.

And remember: Society gets all the criminals it deserves.

-Emma Goldman

### Background Information

The New Madrid faultline in southeastern Missouri is as volatile and potentially destructive as the San Andreas in California. When the New Madrid erupted at 8.6 on the Richter scale in 1812, the midwestern bedrock violently spread the shock waves all the way to the east coast to ring church bells in Boston. John J. Audubon said, "the earth waved like a field of corn in the breeze."

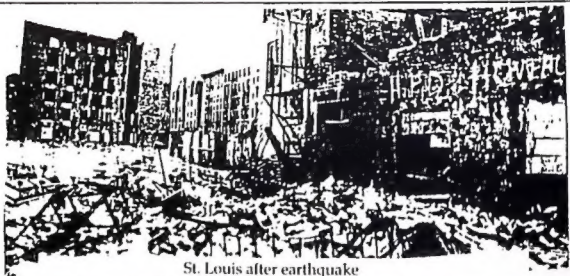


The following is the eleven month chronicle of an amazing set of events...

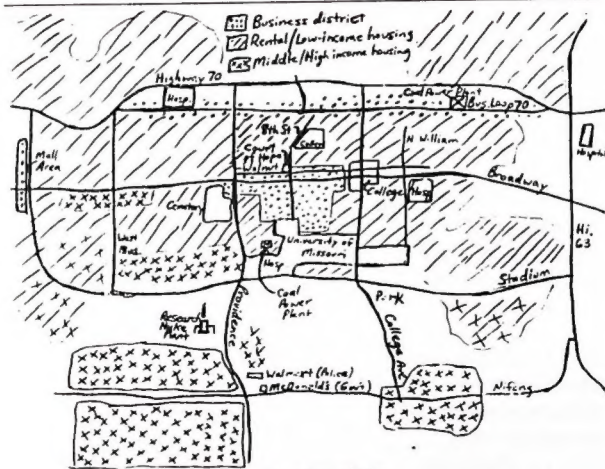


On November 8th, the New Madrid fault in southeast Missouri struck at 8.8 on the Richter scale. Surface fissures and shearing fractures violently ripped open the earth. Cities like Memphis, Cape Girardeau, and Nashville were devastated. The Mississippi River flowed backwards and changed course, swamping towns and agriculture. New lakes formed in sinking fields. The earthquake transformed St. Louis into a burning wasteland: gasoline leaks and explosions; chemical fires; ignited solvents in warehouses. Busch beer flowed in the cracked streets. The inferno at the Monsanto Chemical Co. released cyanides, organochlorines, and a mixture of black and white particles into the dirty smoke cloud that darkened the broiling city. The blistering firestorm spread the pollutant haze throughout the scorching city and surrounding suburbs. A sooty, oily acid rain soon fell on the carnage.

The concrete and asphalt in St. Louis cracked and buckled as the streets shifted and rumbled from the P- and S-waves of the earthquake. Abandoned cars and jackknifed trailers packed the roads and highways. The new metro caved in. The urban grid terminated: electricity failed, sewer and water pipes mixed, natural gas pipes ruptured, telephone lines broke. In the first three cold November days after the quake, thousands died from the collapsing buildings and flaming wreckage of industrial society. The city government no longer existed, leaving survival up to each neighborhood. The survivors built shelters in the drenched debris of their homes...Little Rock, Memphis, and Cape Girardeau experienced similar catastrophic destruction though not as toxic.



(for Lower East Side, NY 1992; or after US bombing of Basra, Iraq Jan. 1991)



Columbia, Missouri Map

automobile. Two hazardous structures burned—one that spewed lethal pesticides and cancerous wastes into the sky, and then the University of Missouri Chemistry Building partially collapsed from the shock waves and partially blew up from the volatile organic solvents inside. The rag-tag fire department contained this flash fire before the flames spread the deadly chemicals stored inside

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throughout the city and its parks and suburbs. The elderly residents of the burning 10-story Tiger Kensington apartment building were sacrificed while the fire department struggled with the explosive blaze at the University of Missouri Chemistry Department.

In the early days following the surprise quake the dismayed survivors feverishly searched for friends and relatives and created temporary shelters out of relatively undamaged houses and structures. University buildings, with their *Bomb Shelter* signs still intact, were places of congregation for many distressed orphans and the new homeless. At the center of town the City Courthouse was declared the "human lost-and-found."

"No one can sleep here. We must keep the Courthouse organized and clean," officiated one of the surviving councilwomen in charge of reuniting lost parents, children and friends.

Several mass graves were dug at city parks.

In the rubble of homes and stores people scavenged the essentials for this chilly Missouri fall: blankets, wood, flashlights, food, and water. Lugging coal from the University and city power plants, mid-Missourians collected and boiled rainwater. Worried, many business owners hurriedly boarded up and guarded their stores with rifles. On the following day the owner of Schnucks ("*The Friendliest Store in Town*") was shot, but the loyal managers continued their 24-hour vigil. By the third day after the New Madrid rumblings, however, the cold and the hungry had stormed many grocery and clothing stores to satisfy their needs, while city council was deciding what to do.

The majority of the police patrolled in the suburbs or at the mall protecting against "looting." Anyone carrying any expensive or new looking item had to be wary of cops--black women or men in the suburbs were immediately in suspicion of looting by the police and the suburbanites.

Due to the state of disrepair of the city government and roads, much clean-up and medical care as with the 1985 Mexico City quake, occurred without being organized by the city. Many doctors and medical students walked from community to community to help the injured. Some people aided others digging for buried survivors. Sharing food, neighbors gathered to cook meals together. Strangers helped each other in clearing fallen structures to live in. Cooperation and helpfulness abounded. Outside assistance was lacking because the National Guard concentrated on the fire and destruction in the

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major midwestern cities. Furthermore, the Callaway County nuclear plant and Minuteman missiles concerned the military especially with the recent terrorist hysteria. The U.S. and the developed world had just invaded South Africa because the new black majority government was audaciously nationalizing Royal Dutch Shell oil and reforming and closing gold, copper, and nickel mines; therefore the U.S. military was already quite engaged.

By the end of the second week after the outset of the disaster, most stores were somewhat empty, all of their products resourcefully claimed. Moreover people had hoarded from the stores more than what they needed--alarmist rumors were circulating about surviving the cold, icy winter without external aid. A suspicious feeling of seriousness and hopelessness descended upon the town--when someone helped a stranger she/he offered anything in exchange except food. Particularly in the city residents stayed indoors and away from business areas in the evening--some night scavengers carried guns. Gun fire could be heard coming from downtown when conflicts arose about looted items. Thus, the old distrust and violence of society mixed with the mutual aid of bare survival.

#### December: Government Leaves Liberation

A series of events precipitated a rift in governing between the mostly white middle-class in the suburbs and the city consisting of the working class, blacks, and college students. Police harassment of looters and city ineptitude left many people hungry and cold. The split began one evening with the shooting of a police officer and the deaths of two Homeless Union activists (The Homeless Union was a new militant group of pre-earthquake homeless people whose members were regularly arrested for squatting in city parks and buildings and refusing to leave.) The next day 300-400 incensed individuals gathered at the Courthouse demanding that guns be taken away from the police. The following morning at 3 am 10-15 masked heathens smashed the windows of the police station and impiously burned and sledgehammered 5 police cars.

Following this fiery justice, most of the police force refused to serve downtown and subsequently the police chief decided to move the station headquarters to Walmart south of town. "Sam Walton would have been proud," proclaimed one mobster.

The inequitable allocation of relief support also divided the



struggling city. When shipments of food and blankets arrived at the shopping center parking lot of the new Police Walmart, two councilmen administered the supplies first to their families and friends and declared this grocery store as the Distribution Center; thus everyone in the central or north parts of Columbia had to walk four miles in the nippy overcast weather to obtain food and supplies. The public became angry that bureaucratic deceit and violence still existed in this time of crisis.

Several provocative anarchists in town stole and cleaned up an obsolete printing press from the Columbia *Tribune* and started printing a newsletter semi-weekly to expose the police brutality and city bureaucrats' stealing of aid. They were also responsible the week before for the truculent poster around downtown calling for *Shooting On Sight* of any police or city officials. After the police refused to even go downtown, these unorthodox posters were probably the catalyst for the city officials to nervously relocate their government from the courthouse to the McDonald's next to Walmart to do their work.



Nervous councilperson  
at McDonalds  
eating sundae!

"McDonald's is closer to our homes," asserted Wilma, a city council member.

"A toast to den.ocracy / the prison guard of this society"  
-(Chumbawamba) scrawled on McDonald's back door

#### Late December: Life without Government (or Capitalism)

Saturday had become the day when people assembled at the Courthouse to hear the latest weekly news report from the council members about Columbia and the rest of the earthquake-stricken midwest. Local issues like food and supplies and now the police killings were discussed. Anger had been building, and this Saturday morning, the week of the murders, several hundred people showed up to discover the government had abdicated. Strong condemnations

about the police abuse and city officials' corruption erupted. A group of inflamed people decided they would visit McDonald's to demand a part of the supply shipments. Others concentrated on what they individually could do now for themselves. Ariel, a closet anarchist, suggested that the Courthouse become a supply or trade center where everyone could bring unneeded items to trade or give away every Saturday. In addition, the Saturday Courthouse gathering could also continue to serve as a time for announcements and requests for help. Lots of volunteers materialized: the ambitious would recruit for clean-up of the city. To create a stockpile at the Courthouse so that medical care would be closer to more people, a group decided to go to the hospitals to pick up bandages, blankets, and medicine. Two medical students and one doctor volunteered to spend time at the Courthouse to care for the earthquake-injured and the sick. City leadership gave way to anarchy: individuals took the initiative on their own to clean up.

By next Saturday, the "food committee" volunteers, those who went to McDonald's South to secure a share of the food shipment, had sacks of beans, rice and flour--a certain amount allotted to each person who came to the morning announcements meeting.

Quite a few folks brought things they did not need like extra blankets, batteries, matches and even toothpaste to the "trade center." People also offered their time and labor in exchange for a little food or even the location of a collapsed house where there still might be canned goods. At the more impersonal trade center participants tended to trade products; whereas in the communities among neighbors most people gave freely their time and help without expecting anything in return. The spirit of helpfulness and mutual cooperation engendered in this extraordinary situation was undermining greed and suspiciousness.

The self-empowering cooperative volunteering spread at the meetings. No one was told what to do. Everyone attempted to achieve group decisions or compromises that satisfied all. This just seemed the right way to do things, commented Billy. This was their greatest strength that attracted more people.

It was too cold now in late December to have these news/ announcements/ trade meetings outside. They decided to hold similar meetings in several schools and homes in the central and northern districts every Saturday. People from the surrounding areas

volunteered to be the coordinators of organizing and publicizing<sup>8</sup> the new indoor locations. Eventually these new public houses would also have medicine, bandages, and the weekly food shipment and perhaps serve as new markets of trade. Soon medical care would be near everyone and thus *accessible* to all. The forty volunteers in the medical committee agreed to search for medical supplies in the remains of Columbia's seven hospitals. Four medical students would recruit doctors from the two operating city-organized hospitals.

News from St. Louis arrived: an estimated 100,000 people died from fires, collapsing buildings, toxic pollution, disease or from lack of food and shelter. The oily conflagration had burned itself out; a choking haze and dirty acidic rain fell and drifted into Illinois. With the smoke levels much decreased, relief efforts by helicopter that had previously concentrated on the surrounding areas now expanded into the smoldering city. There was no news from Kansas City, the missile silos, or the Callaway County nuclear power plant.

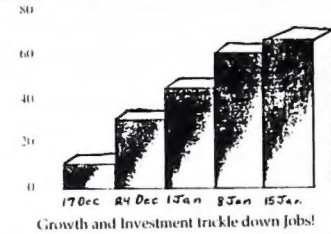
With this melancholy update people solemnly speculated about the freezing winter they would be experiencing without electricity, heat, or enough food. A lack of interest in the clean-up and in the activities of the trade centers existed. Instead of empowering themselves many were still habitually clinging to Power: they hoped to be saved by the U.S. government instead of participating in the trade center activities that would ensure their survival.

Perhaps 1,000 Columbians had given up on all this city turbulence of cops, robberies, supply and food conflicts and city government to live in the tranquil countryside with friends. Another 1,000 had left town to search for family.

#### January: "Economic Growth" and "Crime"

By January 15, out of necessity people began taking part in the community projects especially in exchanging needed goods. The Saturday Market at the Courthouse, renamed the Court of Hope, had grown to the point at which one could find any of the basic necessities there. Recently it was "open" on Wednesday too. Moreover, the smaller "community centers" were flourishing since many folks were investing their time in them. Each one had a supply of coal from the two crumbling power plants because rotating volunteers regularly hauled it in. Area farmers transported grains to give away and swap

for goods. All seven Community Centers were stocked with medical supplies and blankets and remained open to anyone temporarily without a home. Five medical students and three doctors had moved into the Centers. This prosperous growth and organization enlivened the community's vulnerable psychological health in the middle of a snowy winter with shortages of food.



Unexpectedly five people robbed the traders at the Court of Hope and carried away 75 pounds of black beans. Just as downtown violence was lessening due to the dearth of lootable items, the community was outraged. Trustingly embracing force and authority out of old habit, fanatics called for a permanent police force: "Its first duty will be to kill those thieves," Willy shouted. The tension level dropped, and they worked out a suitable compromise: a rotating armed militia would stand guard at all the Centers on Saturdays in the future. To avoid previous problems with cops, volunteers could serve in it no more than three times per month and the militia was given no other powers. Most blacks, many college and foreign students and anyone else who felt an aversion towards cops due to past hauntings advocated the militia idea. However, the anarchists, Homeless Union, and many in the above groups realized the only reason robberies occurred was that some people were deprived or hungry.

The energetic anarchist press, the *Mutual Aid*, continued publishing editorials calling for decentralization and cooperation and non-hierarchical, community organization in whatever project was currently being undertaken. Irreverent articles ridiculed those still nostalgic for the old decrepit





social forms: centralization, government authority, power, cops and corruption. The press focused on specific local issues not getting bogged down in ideological or theoretical nonsense. Not too many people needed to be convinced of the need for mutual aid and cooperation, though many still looked for leaders to order them around.

The *Missourian* of the ex-journalism school stuck to politely reporting on past accomplishments and current challenges.

Weeks later the rotating militia was working well; it eliminated the traditional abusive police force, bureaucracy, and alienating centralization. Since the militia recruited from neighboring homes, people felt it was now theirs not some foreign intruder as before. Each Community Center's militia had one specific purpose and dissolved afterwards. Traders still settled disputes and made agreements among themselves.

#### Early February: the Radicalized War on Crime

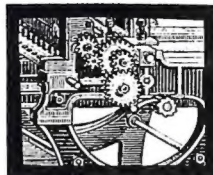
In January shooting and violence downtown at night decreased because lootable objects to fight about had disappeared. But recently February robberies and violence were shifting to the housing districts and to the suburbs. Hunger and lack of supplies were increasing as were desperation and hopelessness in some areas. In the last week three people were killed in hold-ups. At the Saturday meetings again to "fight crime" some people called for permanent cops; others for a limited militia; then at the Court of Hope a discussion developed on the causes of the robberies: 1) people were hungry, 2) lack of supplies like candles, 3) people were stealing what was of value in the old world order: stereos, etc. The group concluded that if reasons 1 & 2 were eliminated little "crime" would exist. Since there was a shortage of food, they were limited in tactics. They resolved, instead of handing food out, to serve meals once every other day so that there was always food available. However they needed to coordinate this plan with the six other Community Centers; otherwise alone, they would be swamped with famished residents. Twelve participants were dispatched immediately to run to the other six centers to propose this idea. Two of the other centers had already established limited roaming militias and were unwilling to change their plans. But the other four decided to attempt to satisfy everyone through meal service. Initially, too, enough enthusiastic

people volunteered to cook food.

Homeless Union activists volunteered to step up searching through abandoned suburban homes for food, candles, etc.

Further a group of cyclists said they would attempt to convince nearby farmers to allow them to bike their stored products to market every Saturday. Some farmers 30 or 40 miles away had silos full of soybeans and grains but could only bring 50 to 60 pounds a week to the Court of Hope. Their mountain bikes could probably make the trip easily bringing many times that amount to the hungry city-dwellers.

To challenge #3 a group of radicals planned a Technology Liberation Action to destroy TVs, stereos, and appliances in the hope of eliminating these environmentally and socially harmful technologies.



These four plans, originating out of a spirit of idealistic cooperation, would hopefully strike at the root of the violence problem by peacefully undermining it with social justice. As Lao-tsu said, "Give evil nothing to oppose/and it will disappear by itself."

"Bothersome cops or militias? No thank you," wrote *Mutual Aid*.

#### Mid-February: Building a New Life and Human(e) Culture

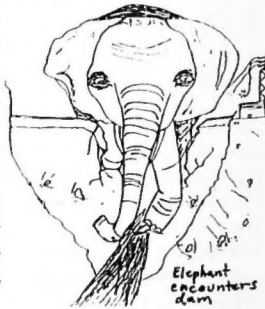
In the southern and southwestern subdivisions people tended to pursue the progress and egalitarian methods of the city. No one seemed to want to follow the city officials after the food scandal. After another shoot-out with the cops over the taking of essential supplies from abandoned suburban homes, suburban public opinion swayed against them too. Many of the police quit. Most communities organized a limited volunteer police force with rotating duties. Expropriation was legal except for outsiders (city folks). Suburbanites introduced several community houses carrying food, medicine, and coal. Logically they too abandoned the city hospitals in favor of local medical supply houses and nearby doctors. The city officials pompously drafted a plan to restore electricity which was greeted ardently. Then the idea died because few wanted to do all the miserable work repairing the electric grid demanded of them.

"If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution."

-Emma Goldman

(sign at one of the soup kitchens)

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Until mid-February people contemplated their immediate survival needs and anticipated the National Guard's arrival. Some cleaned up various parts of town. Trained into complacency, many just obediently waited. The rousing youth however adamantly refused to stop living until some foreign rescue team miraculously saved them: a Bring Your Own Instrument dance wildly raged in Jesse Hall on campus, while bonfires outside lit up the Quadrangle under a crimson sky. Young folks brought trash cans, recorders, guitars and drums--the rhythm spreading through the night buoyantly animated the town's resilient imagination as the weather warmed. Days later the nimble Blind Boone Drill Team marched in their white uniforms and skillfully grooved among the cracks in Broadway. Ballet performers danced in the old Missouri Theater. Neighborhood potlucks brought the communities closer together. Flower garden plots speckled every block, and people planted trees for fun. Simple pleasures like watching the sunrise, talking to your neighbor, rock collecting, and astronomy took hold. Community soccer and baseball teams casually competed. A human culture was being born. A group organized for a vernal equinox celebration to rejoice in their collective survival and successful cooperative projects. The rancid addiction to high-tech electrical civilization was diminishing. Automobiles, VCRs, and microwaves were being missed less. People were replacing TVs with friendships, driving cars with going hiking, and blenders and stereos with poemwriting and singing. Because no one worked at jobs 40+ hours per week and did not have to tend to their technological objects or commitments another 25 hours per week, everyone had a lot more free time.



In the warmer, sunny days a fresh ambition and industriousness grew. A group of ex-students calling themselves the Eighth Street Collective repaired a house to make tofu and soy milk for the Court of Hope Center nearby. A garden committee planned plots in the city to clear areas to plant vegetables. Likewise they coordinated with farmers outside of town--brigades of volunteers

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prepared soil and planted spring vegies like spinach and lettuce in fields. Every Saturday more farmers offered their land for use. Since the food shipments to Columbia had increased and the cyclists were transporting farmers' stored grains and beans, most of the now nine Community Centers were serving daily. Fewer and fewer people were waiting to be saved by external help. A revitalized society was emerging from the turbulent shell of the old. Cheerful optimism surged through the town. In spite of the hardship and living so closely to the edge, people in February began to appreciate the free time and friendly closeness of their neighbors--from the cooperative community spirit that had evolved out of the earthquake. Inhabitants were taking their destinies in their own hands. They began reconstructing their society based on their own personal needs and intimate desires.

"No longer will society be run according to Efficiency, Capital, and Wages," plainly stated one soup kitchen cook.

Because of the free daily meals, robberies decreased particularly after this burgeoning idealism gushed through the town. The Technology Burning Action was a jubilant (smashing!) but small success--perhaps a little before its time.

Word travelled quickly that 30 miles south in Jefferson City, the capitol of Missouri, people were drinking fresh milk! The bikers passionately took to Highway 63 and joyously returned with a trade proposal: for 40 *Central Dairy* cows Columbia would provide to Jeff City seeds and guidance for vegetable planting. The eight Centers unanimously agreed. In this bountiful economic exchange between two cities strong friendships were made and Columbians got the idea of making candles from bee wax (not to mention honey). Jefferson City received some tips on reducing crime and decentralized medical centers.

"An excellent barter of goods and ideas. And tax-free too!" commented the *Missourian*.

A pizza collective in the old Shakespeares restaurant fed long lines of people. Because of their popularity, they handed out tickets (to limit their work load) to each household for two pizzas and some Sassafras tea.

Each of the nine Community Centers of Columbia and the north suburbs showed a pioneering autonomy in rebuilding their society. The Community Center at the Blind Boone Center attacked



racism and organized food and cultural activities in the black community. One center pursued coordinating chicken-raising and egg production with farmers that had coops and surviving chickens. Others fenced in parts of Cosmo and Again street parks for the Central Dairy cows. Several churches organized volunteer groups for various projects. Amish farmers from north of Columbia held classes on basic crafts and gardening. A couple went to the library to research how to make cheese. Just west of Columbia college, the old owner of Smith Bros. Shoe Repair opened up his shoe repair store and bartered for food and meals. The weavers guild members collected materials to make clothes. Designing an oven to fire pottery, enthusiasts made ceramic bowls, glasses, and cooking pots. Several bike mechanics connected bikes to a soybean grinder and oil extractor to make soap. Lye for the soap came from the overabundance of wood ash. From scratch, one doctor produced penicillin. Since high-tech medicine was unplugged, traditional womens' skills, like midwifery and herbal remedies from medicinal plants, gained prominence. Cisterns to collect rainwater served as a drinking source and as a decentralized fire department. People applied their small time hobbies and crafts to real world needs. An



enthusiastic communal sense of wanting to make this community succeed thrived. Bustling Columbia was rising above the precarious pit of bare survival into a sustainable life of low-tech abundance and free time: unproductivelabor such as paperwork for banks and bureaucratic shuffling of

tax and law code had ended, which freed up bored officeworkers to contribute productively to the reconstruction. So instead of writing reports, 1,000's could now do practical work. People felt empowered and in control of their lives and more connected and intimate with others. Bosses, managers, and bureaucrats were troubled.

#### March: Love, Increasing GNP, and Human Rights

Columbian culture blossomed into simple, natural activities. During the March 21 Celebration thousands joined hands in a circle that encompassed the city. Hoards flocked to the parks for picnics and to dance, sing, and play instruments. Horseshoes, frisbees, and balls flew in the Spring air under the greening trees.

Poem reading and story telling transpired at the night campfires. People read books and wrote stories. Street Theater about current issues and the struggle for survival played downtown. Three houses had a butter making party. Columbia overflowed with delightful play and creative spontaneity. Love and dating broke out in March, and after the 21st Planned Parenthood ran out of condoms. Community Gatherings served as opportunities for trading helpful hints and recipes and making friendships.

Since home supplies were running out, more people ate at the centers--the nine centers grew into twelve for the communal meals. What a franchise! Everyone realized the necessity of planting for the summer and working on needed crafts. With persistent calls for volunteers, most work was completed. Agricultural efforts were divided among three areas: 1. large fields of vegetables and grains outside of town; 2. community plots downtown; 3. individual gardens. Lettuce and spinach were sprouting now, a symbol for all of a rising hopefulness.

Power enforced by police and distrust was reformulated. The new power in this society was based only on knowledge and experience and commitment; not on haphazard chance, wealth or arbitrary tradition or heredity. For example cooks who worked a lot at the soup kitchens, by their mere presence, had the "power" to decide what would be cooked or how to set up the kitchen. Those with knowledge and experience had the foresight (and thus "power") to predict problems or suggest how things would work out best. However no one forced decisions or orders on anyone else. Outsiders could still propose meal plans or recipes. There was a beginning apprentice stage: new volunteers' opinions had less weight, but this stage ended when one gained a feel for the operation after a month. In these dynamic kitchens, many accusations of authoritarianism erupted against power-usurping individuals who made too many decisions on their own. These disputes were settled before the whole community center if needed. Compromise and equal power in decision-making.

No one used money in Columbia. Trade and gift were the basis of the sprouting "economy." Free food, blankets and some supplies at the community centers set the precedence for the slight predominance of gift over barter. The motivating force in life had switched from wage slavery and police to the positive spirit of

mutual aid. Shared respect emanated from these economic relationships since no one coerced anyone to work on any project. All projects and associations were voluntary. For instance at the Tofu Anti-Factory on 8th Street, eight committed workers put a lot of time into maintaining the fires, grinding and cooking the beans, and making the tofu. Three other people put only several hours per week into the process. Through trial and error these people discovered that tofu production functioned most smoothly for them with a loose job rotation for the boring jobs like hauling coal. Decisions were consensus based, eliminating any hierarchy of authority. The collective had a turnover rate of 30% every six weeks since some people grew more interested in other ideas and work. One irreparable personality conflict broke out and three people departed to make tofu their own way in a house on N. William--they ended up specializing in soy milk. The pottery makers and "blacksmiths" and other guilds followed similar principles. Most importantly things worked out without bosses and without the McDonald's councilpeople.

Further, the division between work and free time as we know it blurred because people did only what they wanted to. Work and play mixed: when several horny people at Cheese Concerns (a cheese making outlet) came across a new birth control method, they coaxed the other cheese-makers to play in a nearby forest for the day. "Sorry, no cheese today!"

Complaints about "freeloaders" and the lack of help arose. Some diligent cooks worked 16 hour days, whereas others contributed little to the community. Some of these idealistic cooks would have happily given 10 hours per day but worked 16 hours because of the volunteer dearth. In the future volunteer guilds would travel through communities to enlist help and even honestly confront friends known not to be helping much. Some people found this practice annoying and "Orwellian."

At the semi-weekly Court of Hope meeting concerned individuals gathered to discuss city-wide problems. One murder, several batterings and two date rapes occurred in March and April. Most objected to "solving" the violence problem by imprisoning the offenders. Several women proposed to put together an informational flyer on rape and distribute it to as many households as possible. Ex-social work students and professors agreed to attempt to counsel and

talk to the committers of the violence. They opened a guarded shelter for offenders in the top floor of Noyes Hall. The reformees were required to work supervised in an association of their choice during the week but lived in the Shelter where they interacted with the social workers and other volunteers. Thus the Shelter was by no means a prison but the occupants were also not completely free. Many theorized and hoped that by not imprisoning and psychologically amputating offenders they would soon reform to be worthy of the trust of the community again.

A new habitual feeling of responsibility arose among individuals in conflict--they settled it immediately through discussion or brought it to the general meeting. No Judges, no Higher Powers. For example at Finger Lakes a conflict developed between the naked and clothed swimmers because many objected to skinny-dipping at the murky lakes. In the future they agreed that only in certain locations could swimmers bathe naked.

Meanwhile in the Spring warmth 2,000 more Columbians squatted in farm areas and forests. Several thousand students also journeyed to Kansas City and St. Louis to search for parents.

#### Summer: The Harvest of Freedom

Loads of summer vegetables greeted the hard work of Spring planting back in March. The fervent Columbians harvested crisp lettuce, spinach, sweet watermelon and cantalope, strawberries, honey, eggplants, green beans, zucchinis, fresh herbs, butternut and acorn squash, yams, juicy tomatoes, potatoes, green peppers, carrots, soybeans, and some grains. Expeditions to gather wild mulberries, blackberries, and raspberries filled the forests and parks. In late summer crispy apples and jams, jellies, and apple butter grew popular. Healing nutrition had ripened in bountiful Missouri soil. The summer harvest of the earth was served in joyous meals, cheerfully given away. Exotic, creative recipe suggestions for the home-grown vegetables arrived at the soup kitchens. Pancakes, sweet-n-sour stir fry, wild blueberry cobbler, Indian curries.... Columbians experienced their first challenging winter and survived, celebrating amidst a delicious feast of summer fruits and vegetables.

A subject of discussions on Saturdays now was planning food savings for the coming cold months. Various informational posters encouraged healthy nutrition, home canning, wood stockpiling, and winter-proofing the home.



The American  
glucose-fat-salt addiction  
is ending!



(community center pamphlet)

### Late September: Defense of God and Country!

With the only radio transmitter, the Court of Hope was the communication center with the outside world ever since the city officials resigned. Within the next week they ominously learned several hundred National Guard would arrive to "help" Columbia rebuild. Mixed emotions intoxicatingly spread: Some talked of happily returning to the old way of life (especially electricity!) and others of restarting their businesses. Some were jolted, unable to relate to or even desire the old wastefulness, empty ritual and hard work of struggling for survival under the old way. Many felt insecure and alienated about the future. *Mutual Aid* indignantly lambasted the decadent ways of Global Capitalism and Power:

the 40+ hour work week, environmental pollution, crime, being told what to do, stress, soulless commodities, the consumerist spectacle, the distrustful coldness of competition and bureaucracy, unlivable slave wages, unemployment, despondent poverty and extravagant wealth, helpless disempowerment...not to mention the strange habitual fetishes such as valuing money and privilege.

The *Missourian* questioned the need for the National Guard: "All we need from the outside is coal and bulldozers!" But bankers met to finance the rebuilding of the city. Insurance agents speculated on claims, while city planners discussed restructuring the city and mass transit. Judges asked the communal kitchens to be moved from the "Courthouse". Developers planned profitable gentrification. Some people repaired their cars all day. Work is Back!

But much of the community had changed. They were wanting to defend their happiness. Worried, many felt anxiety that their loving, close culture and egalitarian society would be

irreversibly destroyed. Were paychecks imminent?  
Such potent rumors flew...  
That Power might again be flaunted.

Discussions flared. Columbia flipped.

Ideas flashed.

*G a s o l i n e f l o*

*w e d*

Structures of the old order flamed. That night the two-story Boone



(from *Manual del Combatiente por la Libertad* - a US govt/ Contra pamphlet designed to attack the Sandinista literacy, health care and land distribution programs)

County National Bank burned, and the Boone building was trashed. City and bank records of ownership, used to reconstruct entrepreneurial wealth, turned to ash, used to make lye for soap. In addition the thoughtful rioters treasonously torched the police station and a Commerce Bank. Six clairvoyant zealots on borrowed bikes started toward Jefferson City destined for the state records of property and wealth. When the light blue sky glowed with the birth of a new day, carbonized specks of official documents jubilantly flew to meet the rising Jeff City sun. These actions alarmed and radicalized people to understand the urgency of the imminent challenges to their life. Columbia rippled and rumbled from a sociological earthquake. By mid-afternoon a buzzing crowd of 3,000 had amassed downtown and at the Court of Hope. Vigorous discourse concluded the following:

1. Burning banks would not save their society
2. They must unite and communicate effectively

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3. Public meetings held at the 17 Community Centers (5 in the suburbs) to discuss concerns. Tomorrow afternoon 5 representatives from each center would congregate for an open meeting at Hope to set the strategy.
  4. Send a group to Jefferson City to develop solidarity

After the discussions at the individual centers, at the Court of Hope 93 delegates and several thousand others assembled on Wednesday morning. Excitement and tension chaotically divided up the meeting into groups of 10-15 people further elucidating their ideals, desires, and strategies. Cyclists and fast runners volunteered to communicate information between the centers. Amidst the turmoil the 93 compiled ideas from the community meetings for a statement of anti-authoritarian goals and winter needs through which the hidden revolution revealed how much people had changed since November:

"The Court of Hope and 16 other Community Centers have been functioning as our city government for over 9 months. As a township-style direct democracy, we have proven we are the legitimate form of societal organization...We have effectively controlled crime and violence. Through the use of eminent domain we will suitably reimburse storeowners for their lost property, if so desired....

"We want no centralized electricity, water, or telephone system or reconstruction of the coal power plants. We are approaching an exhaustive food distribution system and complete household sewage treatment....

"We need coal for the winter. We request alternative energy technology: wind and solar energy equipment. We request the removal of many of the buckled and cracked roads to be replaced with trees and grass....

The "Constitution" ended up as a haphazard listing of revolutionary desires and requests for the winter as well as attempts to satisfy the U.S. government. With the help of sympathetic lawyers, they declared themselves a "religious, intentional community," sovereign and tax-free according to U.S. government regulations: "...we differ little from East Wind or Twin Oaks commune." *Mutual Aid* boldly asserted:

As disgusting and unrevolutionary as it is to turn to lawyers, we Columbians, nevertheless, are prepared for direct action in the streets to defend our community...."

Eight days later 20,000 signatures on this petition were presented to the confused National Guard commander. Disregarding it, the commander predictably ordered his troops (stationed at the mall) to "begin" clean-up and to police the neighborhoods for "criminals." The Guardspeople found a caring, sharing people and a working society, dispelling the news media myths of "anarchy" and

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violence reigning in Columbia. Some Guardspeople concluded that they were unneeded here. However several skirmishes broke out among some soldiers and defiant residents who refused the imposition of their authority.

At the emergency Community Center meetings, speakers hotly condemned the repulsive effrontery of the military. "It is an attack on our community!" Anarchists, Homeless Unionists, and committed activists coolly handed out guns and bullets for the courageous defense of their autonomy. Some liberals called for traditional-styled elections to gain the confidence of the army. *Mutual Aid* produced reprints of old posters and issues:

Voting gives power and credence to the oppressive Old Order! Voting is a tool of the rich capitalist! Enough of whimpering petitions! Take our city back now! Guard OUT NOW! To the streets!

Meanwhile the Legal Committee started making contacts in Washington, D.C. asserting Columbia's right to self-determination.

In a shoot-out following a sabotage of military equipment, five Columbian armed militants kidnapped a captain and two Guardsmen, but the army trapped them in a house on Walnut St. As the military surrounded the two-story, angry residents, alerted by vigilant runners, gathered around the armed Guardspeople. Within an hour hundreds of sign-carrying, shouting supporters solidified in the area, showing solidarity for the militants. The bewildered Guardsmen and women felt discouraged and unwanted. "Go back to the mall!" As the potent Columbians walked amidst the Guard lines and talked to them, some abandoned their positions. "This is our city!" The armored personnel carriers, loaded, arrived at the mall later, agreeing to return only with shovels, coal, and bulldozers.

Unity and preparedness won the initial battle against Authority. The community of Columbia had defeated the monstrous Leviathan's first attempt to encompass them in its technological carcass of Power. Unfortunately authority is resilient and persistent but so is the human spirit. Hopefully the flowering spirit of mutual aid and cooperation will continue to nurture a strong trust and vibrant unity in Columbia. The power of a close, loving community, Columbians will discover, will irreparably dissolve the megalithic shell behind government and mass production.



The current of mutual aid flows even now and it seeks its way to find out new expression which would not be the State, nor the medieval city...nor the savage clan, but would proceed from all of them, and yet be superior to them in its wider and more deeply humane conception.

Mutual Aid Peter Kropotkin

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Print of woodcut from Marx's *Capital for Beginners* (Smith and Evans)

"The people is bigger than the People's Army."

-Chumbawamba

## Who would have predicted these troubled revolutions 5 years before they erupted?

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1871

In the Paris Commune, workers overthrew the government, attempted to abolish private property and organized cooperation between crafts in this participatory, democratic commune.



1936

Spanish workers in the 1 million strong anarcho-syndicalist CNT collectivized industry, abolished wages, and organized into militias that fought the Hitler-supported Fascists.



1979-1989

In Nicaragua the Sandinista revolution brings social reform, hospitals, and land reform to the poor. Sandinistas held the power of the government and on occasion acted like any government! (repression and corruption)



1989

The downfall in E. Europe and USSR of one of the two major oppressive economic systems in the world. "Communism falls." (Capitalism to go!)

## Revolution: Expect the Unexpected

The tools are always there. All we need is the SPARK!

### Afterword

I had loads of fun putting this zine together! My goal was to have a fun time writing about how a cooperative, wageless society may develop, how it may function, and what changes such a revolution might bring out in humanity. I never thought I could draw or write fiction and enjoy it! But I surprised myself and did both. I just jumped into it and did it!

The news media tell us that a society without government and capitalism would result in a bunch of rogue criminals running around killing and raping people. Many people think anarchism is total lack of any human organization; thus, "it would never work," say those who misdefine and misunderstand anarchist principles. In the media anarchy is always a violent interim period between coups. Indicating their lack of knowledge on the topic many people have asked me, "would anarchy have TVs?" That depends on the people and their desires and situation, as I hope I have portrayed in this short story. But a truly cognizant society would recognize the alienating labor, destruction of the environment, and reproduction of uniformity that TV requires and enforces in its users. Technology makes rigid demands on us. So many of us today are engaged in completely unworthwhile work such as shuffling paperwork for insurance companies. Peeling off the friendly facade of state democracy and high-technology we find an urban underclass, unlivable wages, boring office and fast food jobs, dangerous factories, putrid smokestacks, strict human regimentation, and toxic chemicals.

**"If you don't watch out, the newspapers will have you hating the oppressed and loving the oppressors!"**

-Malcolm X

We have the ability to run society without managers or presidents or police. Bosses and hierarchy do not arise naturally--they are enforced. In revolutionary situations (when there is space for workers to do anything since government and cops are powerless) workers have developed consensus, egalitarian workers councils that literally run the factories (after they kick out the bosses) and distribute food and raw materials to people. Also landless hungry peasants have siezed land from their landlords and farmed it themselves. Read about the following examples: Paris Commune 1871, St. Louis 1877, Russia 1905 & 1917-21, Germany 1918, Italy 1920, Kronstadt 1921, Spain 1936, Hungary 1956, Algeria 1960, France 1968, Chile 1970, Nicaragua 1979. While none of these examples was a perfect non-hierarchical society and all were squashed by police or fascists, they are excellent examples of people taking control of their lives and running society.

Taking some historical examples, one would be amazed at what workers and communities have accomplished when given the opportunity and impetus. For example in Seattle in 1919 a city-wide strike was called and workers and unions started to create a new society of their own making: After 100,000 workers struck, the city was stopped. Firemen and laundry workers continued their work and only vehicles absolutely necessary for everyday life posted a sign, "Exempted by the General Strike Committee." 35 milk stations were set up as well as 100s of soup kitchens serving 1000s daily, all-you-can-eat. The Veteran's Guard served as the police force and was not allowed to carry any weapons. In this peaceful strike a new society outside the bounds of capitalism had flowered. In 1877 in St. Louis after Pennsylvania striking railroad workers were shot, thousands of workers stopped and in brigades approached other employees to also quit work. Bakeries were stormed, black, whites and women were in the leadership of the new strike committee. Food was distributed for the strikers but the military clubbed and beat open meetings of the Workingmens Party and strike committee which ended the rebellion. Bosses could not allow a new society outside of capitalism evolve.

### From the anti-authoritarian clearinghouse:

\**Masturbating in a Church #1* a 12 page picture zine of my lovely adventures in the Catholic Church

*Mutual Aid* by Peter Kropotkin; through autonomous medieval guilds people freely cooperated to meet their daily needs

\*Jerry Mander: 1) *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* 2) *In the Absence of the Sacred* links technology to the genocide of indigenous populations

\**Qué es el Anarquismo?* by Federica Montseny (Spanish CNT anarchist)

\**Against His-story, Against Leviathan!* by Fredy Perlman; An entertaining story of the development of civilization (compared to worms and tentacles). The history of humanity contains a long series of attempts by tenacious people to overthrow civilization, authority, and empire builders to achieve an egalitarian society of their own making.

\**Fifth Estate* 25 year old anti-technology journal; 4632 2nd Ave. Detroit, MI 48201

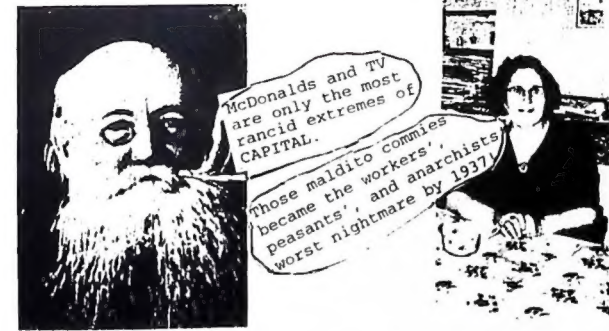
\*From CAL, POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205: 1) *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* 2) *Alternative Press Review* zine reviews and great reprints

\**Present!* high quality zine by Lane with excellent drawings and histories of radical organizers with tragic endings; *Write me for L.A. current address*

\**Witches, Midwives, and Nurses* Ehrenreich and English; history of the suppression of women healers WCF, POB 81961, Chicago IL 60681

\**Take Back Your Life: A Wimmings Guide to Alternative Health Care*; Profane Existence, POB 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408

\**A People's History of the United States* Howard Zinn; a history of social movements  
\**The COINTELPRO Papers: the FBI's Secret War Against Dissent in the US*; Ward Churchill, Jim Vander Wall; the FBI tried to destroy AIM, Black Panthers, SDS and other leftist groups using anonymous letters, political trials, and assassination...



Peter Kropotkin

Federica Montseny, 1952

Thanks to L.A. for inspiring me to do a "zine."  
And to all my wonderful friends.











Grandma relates squatter & revolutionary nostalgia for her grandkids!



### Insurrection is NOT a well-choreographed ballet...

Shit! It ain't even a loosty choreographed square dance. It's a fuckin' chaotic dionysian orgy! That's why revolutionary organizations and the pushers of programs are always light-years behind it -- never catching up till it's died -- 'til insurgent individuals have once again become 'the people' -- that limp corpse puppet organizers animate with the strings of their survivalist programs.

Revolutionary organizers are scared shitless of insurgents. Insurgents are rude, arrogant, nasty. They don't give a fuck for bourgeois values like politeness and toleration, and don't take shit from anyone. They don't calmly wait their turn in properly facilitated discussions, like some well-behaved kindergartner trying to connive their way into extra milk and cookies. They get into shouting matches and brawls and temper tantrums and then go off arm in arm to the pub to get drunk and laugh at themselves. But, damn that sort of energy scares well-behaved revolutionary organizers - it's disorderly, it's chaotic, it won't fit into the box of their nice little programs. And that's why revolutionary organizers - like all politicians - are my enemies.

All of 'em?  
Yes, all of 'em -- Feral Faun



CENTRALIZED INDUSTRIAL MEGAMACHINERY  
WAGES POLLUTED URBAN UNDERCLASS

WAR  
ON  
MUTUALLY COOPERATIVE PLAYTIME AUTONOMY





